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LORD NORTH, THE PRIME MINISTER: A PERSONAL MEMOIR.—I.

BY LORD NORTH.

I.

IN responding to the request of the Editor of the *NORTH AMERICAN REVIEW* to contribute an article on the character and career of my great-grandfather, Lord North, the Prime Minister. it is not my object to enter upon a vindication of his public acts, or to give a complete account of his life, as that would practically comprise a history not only of England, but also of America during that period. Having often been favored with communications from correspondents in the United States, who desired information which they believed me able to supply from family papers, I feel encouraged to think that, notwithstanding the lapse of time, some general interest in Lord North, as well as in his times, may still remain. I have ventured to put my contribution in the form of a biographical sketch, inserting in the proper order such letters of public interest as I have selected from Lord North's letters to his father, the Earl of Guilford, and which have never before been given to the public.

These letters form part of a life-long correspondence, which, unfortunately for its historical value, confines itself for the most part to topics of family or personal interest, and yields but comparatively few relating to public affairs. The valuable collection of letters received by Lord North from George III., to the number of over seven hundred and fifty, was given up by the family and is now in His Majesty's library at Windsor Castle. These letters have, however, been printed, and I have made use of them.

It must be admitted that Lord North has received from the hands of those writers who have made a study of his times a generous appreciation of his merits and qualities; at the same

time, I believe he has received scant justice from the hasty deductions and generalizations of the compilers of more popular forms of history books. To those who happen to have derived their views from the latter source, I trust the subjoined notes and letters will be welcome, as serving to illustrate the career of a statesman whose name is inseparably connected with a memorable time, and to make his true character more correctly understood.

Frederick North, afterward commonly known by the courtesy title of Lord North, was born in April, 1732, and was the only son, by his first marriage, of Francis, seventh Lord North and third Baron Guilford, grandson of Francis North, first Baron Guilford, who was Lord Keeper of the Great Seal under Charles II. and James II. His mother was Lady Lucy Montagu, daughter of the second Earl of Halifax; and Frederick, Prince of Wales, stood sponsor at his baptism. Francis, Lord North, had the honor of being selected by Frederick, Prince of Wales, to take charge of the education of his two eldest sons, Prince George and Prince Edward; but on the death of the Prince of Wales he was removed by the influence of the Pelhams, who wished themselves to have control over the education of the young princes. Although not long enough in office to exert much influence on the minds and temperaments of his pupils, this close association with them probably laid the foundation of the intimacy and affection afterward manifested by George III. toward his Minister, Lord North.

Francis, Lord North, was created Earl of Guilford in 1752, and held the office of Treasurer to Queen Charlotte. He was a man of cultured mind and elevated character, and devoted especial care and interest to the education of his son Frederick, who in return held his father in the greatest affection and respect. The evidences of the singularly charming relations which existed between father and son are contained in the letters from the latter which have been preserved at Wroxton, and which date from the schoolboy's earliest production and continue down to the closing years of the old Earl's life.

Frederick was sent to school at Eton, where he was distinguished by his application to his studies, and, at the age of fifteen, a friend writes to his father to tell him how delighted he was to find the boy "not only so good a scholar, but that he has so good a taste and makes so good a judgment upon all the books he reads"; while Dr. Dampier, the Head Master at Eton, writes

to say, "I am pleased to see in many instances how both the masters and the boys love him, and that he really, by his behavior, deserves it from both, which is not often the case. I think he has greatly contributed to the very good order the school is in at present."

From Eton he went in 1749 to Trinity College, Oxford, where he had the good fortune to awaken the interest of his tutor, the Rev. J. Merrick, a very worthy man, who engaged his mind on religious subjects and led his thoughts to serious views of conduct and duty in life. During his absence from Oxford between terms he expressed a desire that Mr. Merrick should continue to write to him, "in the hopes of receiving assistance in his most important concerns." Mr. Merrick's letters speak of the young man's religious spirit, habits of piety, and "uniform attention to the minuter points of duty." Mr. Merrick tells him: "It is an unspeakable satisfaction to me that you have by God's blessing been made sensible of the importance of religion before your entrance upon public life. Your improvement in piety, at this season of your life, will be the best preparation for every future scene of it; and your preserving that cheerfulness of temper and desire for knowledge which you now have, may be of excellent use in recommending the example of your piety to others." Frederick seems to have communicated his own esteem for Mr. Merrick to his father, who wrote him the following letter, of which the young man shows his appreciation by carefully preserving it with the note "From Papa, December 2, 1749":

"Wroxton, Decr. 2nd, 1749.

"My Dear, I thank you for your kind wishes to me, but cannot agree with Mr. Wise in thinking the gout matter of congratulation when it comes to a healthy person, though it may be a great relief to a person labouring under worse distempers. You give me the greatest pleasure by informing me you are so happy and well pleased at Oxford. . . . You make me very happy by what you say about Mr. Merrick, of whom I have a very high opinion. I hope the sentiments with which he has inspired you will always remain, for experience will show you that a strong sense of religion in the heart is the most essential thing in the world to our happiness here, as well as hereafter. Being thoroughly sensible that whatever is ordered by an all-wise, just and merciful Being, tending to our happiness, though by ways imperceptible to us, and that consequently whatever is, is right, will beget in us a submission that will blunt the edge of the misfortunes, and a thankfulness that will double our joy in the happy events of life. The Christian religion is strangely misapprehended by those to whom it seems a dull

thing. To me it seems to be the only solid foundation for constant cheerfulness. I am, my Dear, your very affectionate father, NORTH."

Frederick left Oxford with the reputation of being a very accomplished classical scholar, and was then sent by his father to continue his education on the Continent. He travelled through the principal countries of Europe, visiting each capital in turn; and at Leipzig he made a long stay for a course of studies under the celebrated Mascow, whose lectures on the "Present State of Europe in Respect to Politics" gave him especial interest. He wrote frequently to his father giving his impressions of the different countries and the courts at which he was received, and these letters (often written in French) show great power of observation and description, and form a most interesting history of his travels. During his absence abroad Lord Guilford was raised to the dignity of an Earl, and his son writes him the following letter of congratulation:

"Leipzig, April 23, N. S., 1752.

"My Lord,—After having beg'd a thousand pardons for my former negligence, and giving you a thousand thanks for your two obliging letters (your great one in French which I received about a fortnight ago, and your little one in English which I received to-day) I proceed to congratulate you on your new increase of dignity. Indeed, my Lord, it gives me a sincere pleasure merely for your Lordship's sake, exclusive of any advantage accruing to myself in particular, to see that His Majesty has confirm'd the favour, which the nation, at least the best part of it, had confer'd upon you a long while ago.

"Your advancement, tho' it consists merely in a title, must be very agreeable to you on many accounts, as it takes off all appearance of your being in an ill-light with the court, as it is the fruit of merit and not of intrigue, and as the universal esteem and love you have gained will prevent its being either censured or envied.

"I believe, my Lord, I may answer for your family that we are not ungrateful for the great care and trouble you give yourself to render us happy and considerable. You have too good an opinion of me when you imagine me capable of adding a lustre to the dignity you have acquired. I am so far from thinking myself capable of adding a new lustre to it, that I have the greatest apprehension lest I should tarnish and diminish that which it has already. I hope that God will long preserve it where it is at present, that your Lordship may, by His grace, long enjoy an uninterrupted series of happiness, and continue as you now are—the support, defence, joy, and ornament, of your friends, your family, and your country.

"I am, my Lord,

"Your most affectionate & most dutiful son,

"FREDERICK NORTH."

On his return home, Lord North (as he had then become) entered at once upon a political career, and in 1754 was elected

at the age of twenty-two Member of Parliament for Banbury, which place he continued to represent for nearly forty years. In 1756 he was married to Miss Anne Speke, the daughter of George Speke, of Dillington, Somerset, and there never was a more happy union. After three years' experience of Parliamentary duties, he was selected in December, 1757, to second the Address in reply to the King's Speech at the opening of Parliament, and the manner in which he acquitted himself of this duty gave him at once a recognized position as a first-rate Parliamentary speaker. His father was the recipient of many letters of congratulation on his son's success. Lord Jersey wrote that he had the greatest pleasure in being able to tell "with what great ability and manly understanding his son discharged his undertaking in the House of Commons." "Never did a maiden effort give more satisfaction, and the applause was universal," and he congratulated the Earl on "being blessed with a son endowed with such attainments and qualifications to make a father happy." His old Head Master at Eton, Dr. Dampier, wrote to say with what great pleasure he had heard of his former pupil's success from an old member, who assured him that he had never heard a young man do better—no awkwardness in his person, his language fine and correct, took in every circumstance the subject permitted—that he had that day raised to himself a great repute, and his father's labors had succeeded. Mr. Charles Montague wrote:

"His performance is the subject of discourse in all companies. If anybody was sorry, I fancy it was the Secretary of State to have his work taken out of his hands and to see he had so dangerous a rival. I am not singular in this notion. He possessed himself perfectly well, his language was correct and not too flowery, no hesitation from beginning to end, his action decent and proper, his voice very clear and distinctly heard everywhere, never harsh, the present state of Europe finely represented, our misfortunes touched upon so as to give no offence to anybody: a most masterly performance it was indeed."

His subsequent efforts in debate confirmed the good impression thus made, and his relish for business and steady attention to it received signal recognition when, in Mr. Pitt's first administration, he was chosen by the Duke of Newcastle to be a Lord of the Treasury. In a letter to Mr. Pitt, of May 24th, 1759, the Duke of Newcastle says:

"I this day recommended my Lord North to the King to succeed my Lord Bessborough in the Treasury. He is a near relation of mine, but I hope his appearance in Parliament will make the choice ap-

proved, and that he will be in time a very able and useful servant of the Crown."

In a letter to his father on January 4th, 1760, Lord North speaks of his first reception by the King.

"I presented the Address this morning, and was really most graciously received. The King spoke to me twice, which is, you know, a transgression of the rule with respect to Commoners very much in my favour."

Lord North continued to occupy a seat at the Treasury Board, under Lord Bute and George Grenville, till 1765. In 1763 he had established himself in such a high position as a debater that to him was assigned by the Government the task of conducting the proceedings in the House of Commons against Wilkes. His motion that No. 45 of the *North Briton* was "a false, scandalous and seditious libel" was carried, and the paper was publicly burnt in front of the Royal Exchange. Subsequently he took a leading part in the debates on the expulsion and breach of privilege; but, although his reputation as a debater was considerably increased, the part he played was distasteful to him, and he wished that the duty of defending the arbitrary proceedings of the Government, in respect to the issue of general warrants, had fallen into other hands. His sentiments are expressed in the following extract from a letter to his father of November 8, 1763:

"Your lordship will be in town at a very bustling time in both Houses, as I apprehend we shall invite the Peers to join with us in censuring the libel and determining the point of privilege. Nothing can go more against me than the business I am now upon, but while things stand in their present ticklish situation it is impossible to avoid it. You may be sure I shall be very moderate in my expressions, but that will be to no purpose. The part I take will be an unpardonable crime with the other side. I begin heartily to wish I had followed my own opinion in going out with the Duke of N. (Newcastle): I should have spared myself many an uncomfortable moment. From the time one engages one draws closer and closer, until one has so far engaged that one cannot in honour decline taking a part in a thousand affairs wherein one would choose to be quiet."

On the fall of the Rockingham Ministry in 1766, he was offered by Mr. Pitt the office of Paymaster in the new administration, which was being formed under the nominal headship of the Duke of Grafton. The offer of the place was conveyed by Mr. Pitt to Lord North in the following letter:

"North End, near Hampstead.

"Monday, July 28th.

"My Lord,—The King having most graciously pleased to admit me to some share in His Majesty's councils and Royal Confidence, I have His Majesty's permission to communicate to your lordship, first, some principal arrangements for Administration, now on the point of going into execution. They are as follows:—Lord Northington, at his own desire, retiring from the labours of Chancery, Lord Camden will have the Great Seal; Lord Northington, President of the Council; the Duke of Grafton goes to the Head of the Treasury; Mr. C. Townshend being Chancellor of the Exchequer; Lord Shelburne and Mr. Conway, Secretaries of State; your humble servant Privy Seal. Having now imparted to your lordship this outline, I have now the honour and pleasure to open to you by His Majesty's commands that the King would see with satisfaction Lord North return to his service. It is His Majesty's intention to make two joint Paymasters-General, and should your lordship (fortunately for the King's service) think it agreeable to you to be one of them, I should esteem myself happier in having writ this letter, which I now take the liberty to trouble you with, than in most where I have had the King's commands to employ my pen.

"Allow me now, my lord, to end where I ought to have begun, with an apology for an intrusion upon your retreat. The best and only one (as to the share I have had in the occasion of it) is a sincere desire to approve myself zealous for the strengthening of His Majesty's Government by inviting to it abilities and dignity, as well as particularly to preserve to myself the valuable privilege I have held from ancient days of being the sincere humble servant and well wisher of Lord North and his family.

"I am, with great esteem and respect,

"Your lordship's most obedient &

"most humble servant,

"WILLIAM PITT."

Mr. Pitt's letter was enclosed in the following letter from Lord North to his father, in which he describes his appreciation of the offer:

"Old Burlington Street.

"July 31st, 1766.

"My Lord,—The enclosed will account for my being here. I received it on Tuesday morning as soon as I awoke. It was (sent) to Dillington by King's messenger. I set out the same day at noon and arrived here at 10 o'clock this morning.

"The offer is very honourable, profitable, and agreeable, and I see no reason on earth why I should refuse it. But upon my coming hither I was met with a very unpleasant piece of news. Lord D—th (Dartmouth) finding that the Plantations were to continue united to the Southern Department, contrary to what he had been led to expect, thought himself obliged in honour to resign, and resigned accordingly yesterday morning. Nothing can be more vexatious than to find myself constantly, by the strange political jumbles, opposed to one of the men in the world that I honour, love and esteem the most. These events damp all the pleasure of preferment.

"Mr. Pitt kissed hands yesterday on being appointed Earl of Chatham and Viscount Pynsent. I cannot say that upon first sight I should have advised this step. I should have thought the Administration more steady with him in the House of Commons. The other promotions not mentioned in Mr. P's letter are Sir Eardley Willmot, Lord Chief Justice of Common Pleas; Mr. Hussey, a Justice of the King's Bench; Mr. Pryse Campbell, a Lord of the Treasury in the room of Lord John Cavendish; and Mr. Hans Stanley, Ambassador Extraordinary to the Court of Petersburg. Mr. Yorke is disgusted at Lord Camden's preferment, and quits the post of Attorney-General; the Solicitor-General will succeed him, and be replaced by Mr. Edward Willes. Lord Chatham told me the law arrangements were settled entirely by Lord Northington and Lord Camden. I have not yet heard who is to be my colleague and who the First Lord of Trade. I imagine Mr. Dowdeswell will be one or the other.

"As soon as I have kissed hands I suppose I should write letters to all my constituents for their votes and interest against my re-election. It is disagreeable that the borough should be open so long. I met George at Salisbury on his way down; he was, thank God, in perfect health and spirits. My duty to Lady Guilford.

"I am, my Lord,

"Your most dutiful son,
"NORTH."

Lord Guilford was also the recipient of the following letter from Lord Chatham, as Mr. Pitt had now become:

"North End.

"Wednesday, August, 1766.

"My Lord,—I am honoured with your lordship's most obliging letter, which brings me the very flattering remarks of the continuation of those favourable and friendly sentiments of which I have long been proud. It is no compliment when I assure your lordship that the return of Lord North into the King's service must be considered by me as a very material acquisition which His Majesty's Government makes, and I shall esteem myself particularly fortunate, as well as greatly honoured, by being permitted in any degree to have been the small instrument of contributing to give effect to His Majesty's favourable and just dispositions towards his lordship.

"Allow me, my Lord, to embrace with particular satisfaction this occasion of renewing assurances of my long established sentiments of respectful esteem and affectionate regard towards Lord Guilford, and of the truth with which I have the honour to be,

"Your Lordship's most faithful & most

"obedient, humble servant,

"CHATHAM."

Lord North, accordingly, became joint Paymaster-General of the Forces, with Mr. George Cooke as his colleague, and was admitted a member of the Privy Council on December 10, 1766. In the discussion on Indian affairs his debating abilities continued to be advantageously displayed, and he was regarded with such favor

by Lord Chatham that in March, 1767, the latter, being indignant at Townshend's conduct over one of the East India questions, paid Lord North the high honor of offering him the Chancellorship of the Exchequer and the Leadership of the House of Commons. Diffident of his ability to fill that high office, he declined it.

About this time George Grenville, we are told, walking in the park with another gentleman, met the future Prime Minister apparently rehearsing a speech. "Here comes blubbery North," said the latter to Grenville. "I wonder what he is getting by heart; I am sure it cannot be anything of his own." "You are mistaken," replied Grenville. "North is a man of great promise and high qualifications, and if he does not relax his political pursuits he is very likely to be Prime Minister." This prediction, so perfectly fulfilled, has its counterpart in another, which came from the man to whose office Lord North immediately succeeded. "See," said Charles Townshend, "that great, heavy, booby-looking seeming changling! you may believe me when I assure you as a fact that, if anything should happen to me, he would succeed to my place, and very shortly after come to be First Commissioner of the Treasury." It may be gathered from these adjectives, so pleasantly applied, that Lord North's figure and personal appearance were not in his favor. Although in his youth I find his travelling tutor telling his father that "Mr. North by the ingenuity of his manners add'd to the comeliness of his person gained himself an universal admiration," in later life his figure grew more corpulent and his movements awkward, while his face was heavy, and his eyes, which stood out prominently, had the additional defect of being very short-sighted. The heaviness of his features gave no indication of the brightness of his understanding, but his face was always agreeable owing to its habitual expression of cheerfulness and good humor.

In fact, Lord North was very like George III. himself. This resemblance was noticed in their youth by the King's father, Prince Frederick of Wales, who used to have his little joke on the subject with Lord Guilford. Lady North, as her picture at Wroxton reveals, was not endowed with good looks either, and her eldest daughter very much resembled her. A story is told that, at the opera one evening, Lord North was in company with a distinguished foreign visitor who wished to learn the names of the principal people in the audience. "Who is that plain-looking lady

in the box opposite?" he asked. "That," replied Lord North, "is my wife." "Oh, pardon," said the visitor; "I did not mean that lady, but the other beside her." "The other, sir, is my daughter," adding, in his merry, good-natured way, to relieve the gentleman's confusion, "and I may tell you we are considered to be three of the ugliest people in London."

Very shortly afterward Charles Townshend died, and the Duke of Grafton proposed the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer to Lord North, who accepted it, being then in his thirty-sixth year. This office carried with it the leadership of the House of Commons, and in this capacity Lord North was there the mouthpiece of the Cabinet. He writes on October 12, 1767:

"My Lord,—We are infinitely obliged to your lordship for your very kind letter. I speak in Lady North's name as well as my own. Whether in future times I shall be able to be a very regular correspondent I cannot tell, but at present I should be without excuse if I did not take an early opportunity of acknowledging your kindness. My office has hitherto answered Lord Bottetourt's description of it, but to-morrow I shall plunge into business, and expect to continue over head and ears in it till the end of the Session. It is a great comfort to think we are likely to rise early in the spring. My present leisure proceeds in a great measure from a mistake in some of the officers in Chancery who did not prepare the new Commission of the Treasury at the same time with the patents of the Chancellor of the Exchequer and Under Treasurer, so that I have not yet been able to take my place at the Board. The new Commission may be now for aught I know in your lordship's street at Bath. I expect it back time enough for me to take my place at the next Board on Friday. I entirely agree with Lord Dacre in his notion of the principal dangers of my office. I will profit by his friendly advice and endeavour to guard against them. Just now I run no risk. I ride out every morning at eight o'clock, have no cook of my own, and not a single friend in town. The Duke of Grafton did not come to town time enough on Wednesday to be at the Cabinet himself, and so I was not summoned. But I have seen him since, and he has assured me that he understood it to be the King's intention that I should be always summoned and considered as a member of the Cabinet. I have not the vanity to imagine that my advice can be of any consequence in the planning of Government, but this I am certain of, that it will be very difficult for me to act in concert with the Cabinet and promote their plans in Parliament unless I am present at the meetings at which they are formed.

"I hear the clock striking eight, and am prevented by it from expressing the gratitude that I feel for all the tenderness and affection which breathes through your Lordship's letter. But I will write to-morrow whatever I have not time to say now.

"I am, My Lord, Your most dutiful son,

"NORTH."

The next letter makes it clear that Lord North obtained his promotion to cabinet rank without any ambitious seeking on his part.

"Pay Office.

"October 14th, 1767.

"My Lord,—The departure of the post prevented me both yesterday and the evening before from thanking you as I ought for your kind and affectionate letter of the 8th of this month.

"Though your lordship's good opinion of me has probably a great mixture of partiality in it, it makes me inexpressibly happy, and I am confident nothing can more powerfully recommend me to those with whom I am to act for the future than this mark of your approbation. I flatter myself that I shall never forfeit it through any want of duty to your lordship or of gratitude for your increasing goodness towards me, or by any deviation from that fidelity and integrity which ought to guide all my actions in the execution of my office. I am afraid it will be soon found how unequal my abilities are to the task in which I am engaged, but if His Majesty and his ministers have made an insufficient Chancellor of the Exchequer they may thank themselves for it, for I can truly say I never obtruded myself upon them, and do not desire to continue in my place an hour after it shall be found prejudicial to the public.

"I have not yet been able to examine into the state of our force in Parliament, but we are likely to have a short session and very few difficult questions in the course of it, so that with the authority of the Administration before a general election I hope we shall surmount all opposition.

"I do not conceive that Mr. Wilkes ever had any serious thoughts of offering himself a candidate for London, but his friends took every opportunity of bringing him upon the stage for fear he should be forgotten.

"Our duty and love to your lady and Brownlow.

"I am,

"Your lordship's most dutiful son,

"NORTH."

An interesting account of the funeral of the Duke of York, the King's brother, is given in the next letter, and we read of an audience with His Majesty, which points to a beginning of the royal favor, while the allusion to his son's letter shows all the fondness and pride of a parent whose relations with his children have been handed down as being of the happiest and tenderest nature.

"Pay Office.

"November 2nd, 1767.

"My Lord,—This is a strange day in London. In the midst of the melancholy preparations for the interment of the Duke of York, we have the joy of hearing that Her Majesty is safely delivered. She was brought to bed this morning of a prince. The bells were ringing all the forenoon upon the birth of the nephew, and have been tolling all

the evening for the death of the uncle. The hearse and coaches of the party of the Court set out this morning for Greenwich to receive the body from on board the yacht. . . .

"I will now come to matters of pleasanter nature. In the first place I enclose to your Lordship a letter I received on Saturday morning from General Conway, the contents of which were so gracious and honourable to me that I thought it right to go yesterday to Court to desire a private audience, in order to return my thanks to His Majesty. I met with a very gracious reception, and had a pretty long conference on various matters, a great part of which related to your lordship, and I took that occasion to execute the commission you gave me in your letter of the 27th. I said all that I thought was handsome and proper on the occasion, and I must need say the Great Personage was not behindhand with me. All his expressions concerning your Lordship were as full of esteem and regard as you can conceive and desire.

"I send you another letter which has just come to my hands, and which gives me as much pleasure as Mr. Conway's. You will see it is perfectly well spelt and written, though it is the first attempt of the author to write to any of us upon single lines. I have received under the same cover from Dr. Dampier a mighty good account of his health and behaviour. . . .

"I am truly grateful for the kind expressions of Lord Dacre's letter, as I am for his constant friendship for me. I hope the commendations I heard were from the heart. I think it is scarcely possible to know Lord Dacre, even so much as the person alluded to does, without being convinced that they are due to him.

"Lady North sends her duty.

"I am, My Lord,

"Your most dutiful son,

"NORTH."

In the office of Chancellor of the Exchequer, Lord North's early Budgets gained him considerable reputation. Taking Adam Smith as his master in finance, he applied the principles of the "Wealth of Nations" in the adjustment and equalization of the burdens of taxation; and his skill in financial statements is mentioned by a writer of his time. "In opening the Budget he was esteemed peculiarly lucid, clear and able. On that account he constituted a day of triumph to his friends and supporters, who exulted in his talents which he displayed whenever he exhibited the state of the national finances or imposed new pecuniary burdens." The King also, in one of his letters, pays him the compliment of saying: "Lord North is remarkably clear in stating matters of finance."

His popularity with the House of Commons and the country continued to increase. His good temper was never ruffled, and his ready wit and engaging disposition procured him many friends and admirers. Cambridge conferred upon him at this

period the honorary degree of LL.D. Yet he is at this time, during a debate, expressing his indifference to popularity. "I do not dislike popularity," he said, "but it happens that, for the last seven years, I have never given my vote for any one of the popular measures." Then, after enumerating these various measures, he continued: "I state this to prove that I am not an ambitious man. Men may be popular without being ambitious, but there is rarely an ambitious man who does not try to be popular."

At the close of the year 1769 Lord North makes in a letter to his father some interesting reflections upon his own position and the state of affairs, which indicate the character of his own opinions at that time on matters apparently in controversy in the Cabinet:

"Ashted, December 25th, 1769.

" . . . Notwithstanding the untoward political events of the last year, I never felt more perfectly easy, happy, and self-satisfied than I do at present; I think I have done what I ought, and what every reasonable and honest man will approve. I feel myself totally disencumbered from all connections, obligations, and engagements, and entirely free to chase the path that my conscience and opinion dictates. A very pleasant feel it is! I think I have done by all parties as handsomely as they could desire, and perhaps more than they could in justice demand. What is past gives me no regret. My present situation is comfortable and my future prospects by no means unpleasing. I may add that my pride, which was, I confess, a little mortified in the course of the year, has by the late offer been gratified to the utmost of its wish. Tho' in many of the questions that will arise in the course of this session I shall be forced, from fix'd opinion, to differ from the present Ministers, yet I shall do it without the least spleen or ill-will to their persons. I sincerely wish them success in their public labours, and hope that they will not in order to purchase a little momentary peace take any step that may lay the foundation of endless tumults for the future, and deprive this nation of any of its most valuable and essential rights. . . .

"I am, my Lord, Your most dutiful son,

"NORTH."

At the opening of the year 1770 the Duke of Grafton found his Administration beset with difficulties. Under the vehement attacks of Lord Chatham, who had emerged from his retirement, it fell to pieces, and the Duke of Grafton, unable to fill the offices vacated by the resignation of several Ministers, was seized with panic and sought refuge in resignation, leaving the affairs of the nation in the greatest disorder. What George III. called "a critical period," and what Lord North termed afterward "a time of trouble and danger," had now arrived. The King's aversion to

the Whig ruling families, from whose influence he had been for ten years struggling to emancipate himself, made him seek every expedient to keep the present Administration in power, in order to avoid sending for the chiefs of the Opposition and submitting to their terms. He addressed the following earnest entreaty to Lord North:

"Queen's House,

"January 23rd, 1770.

"40 minutes pt. 10 a. m.

"Lord North,—After seeing you last night I saw Lord Weymouth, who by my direction will wait upon you with Lord Gower this morning, to press you in the strongest manner to accept the Office of First Commissioner of the Treasury; my mind is more and more strengthened with the rightness of the measure, which would prevent every other desertion. You must easily see that, if you do not accept, I have no other peer at present in my service I could consent to place in the Duke of Grafton's employment. Whatever you think, do not take any decision, unless it is one of instantly accepting, without a farther conversation with me. As to the other arrangements you may hear what others think, but keep your own opinion till I have seen you."

Lord North, distrusting his own fitness, would gladly have preferred to avoid the duty and responsibility thus cast upon him by this appeal; but, desirous of preserving the framework of administration, he resolved to obey the King's wishes—a proof of his devotion to his Sovereign which the King afterward said he never could forget. In the ten first years of his reign there had already been six administrations; that of Lord North was destined to last longer than its six predecessors combined, and yet none had entered into existence under less favorable circumstances. The fact that it was able to escape defeat and hold together for twelve years is ascribed in some degree to the ability, popularity and conciliatory qualities of the Prime Minister.

Breaking off at this period of Lord North's life I shall deal with the remainder in another article.

NORTH.